

G.W.T.

NORTHERN ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION.

Inaugural Address, 44th Session, 11th Nov. 1903.

By J. WALTON TAYLOR [*F.*], *President.*

MR. VICE-PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—

We are met to inaugurate the commencement of the 44th Session of the Northern Architectural Association, and I feel it a great honour to be privileged to address you for the first time from the Presidential Chair. I need scarcely say how much I rely upon the cordial support of every individual member, as well as the Council, to make my term of office conducive to the well-being and best interests of the Association.

The thought uppermost in our minds this evening will doubtless be the generous gift of £1,500 (in addition to £50 given a year or two ago) by our old friend Mr. William Glover, F.R.I.B.A., of "Meadowcroft," Windsor, formerly of Newcastle-on-Tyne, a past-President of this Association. Many will remember how, during his term of office as President, he not only encouraged the students by offering substantial prizes, but endeavoured to inspire them with enthusiasm for the profession he loved so well. Several who now hold positions of responsibility owe their success in a great measure to his kindly sympathy and support. Our indebtedness to Mr. Glover is now vastly increased by the deed of gift recently executed by him, and held by trustees for the benefit of the Association, the interest accruing from investments to be devoted to the Library, providing lectures or other educational facilities, and for instituting a Travelling Studentship with medals and prizes, which the Council have suggested

should be named after the donor. Of this sum, £500 has been set apart by Mr. Glover as a nucleus for a permanent building of our own, and a representative committee has been appointed to further the scheme and obtain donations for its fulfilment. It is therefore fitting that, at our first meeting, we should give expression to our deep obligation to our good friend Mr. Glover, and publicly acknowledge his munificent gift. It is also sincerely to be hoped that the younger generation of architects will avail themselves of these advantages to the fullest extent, and endeavour to realise Mr. Glover's aspirations for the city of his adoption.

It has been hinted by some of the senior members that the main object for which the Association was formed, in 1858, has been somewhat lost sight of in the special efforts which have been made to interest and assist the younger members. Now let me remind you that "the Association was formed to promote union amongst its members, the elevation of the profession of architecture, the establishment of uniformity of practice, and the general advancement of the art and science of architecture." I venture to think you will agree with me that, if an Association is to be successful, its activities must not be too much confined to one section only, but must be representative of all its various interests and agencies; and I also am of opinion that, even if more attention has been given to the younger members of late years than formerly, the result will prove the wisdom of the course taken. Those who have attended the outdoor excursions in summer and lectures in winter, must have been cheered by the large number of students and young men who were present. There has, however, of late years, been a falling off in the attendance of the pioneers. I know how difficult it is for those in active practice to spare time to keep so many engagements in this very busy age, whilst those who have borne the burden and heat of the day may reasonably expect to be permitted to enjoy their well-earned leisure; but I think we should bear in mind how much others may be

helped by our presence and influence. I therefore appeal to my older brethren to support the Council and myself in our honest endeavour to further the interests of every department of our work, for the seniors as well as the students, and make the Association a greater means of usefulness than it has ever been before.

EDUCATION OF ARCHITECTS.

This year the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects made a departure which, to my mind, is of the greatest importance to our profession. At the invitation of the President (Mr. Aston Webb, R.A.) the Presidents of the Allied Societies were invited to attend a conference at the Institute rooms in London, to discuss the education of architects and the Registration Bill. Nine or ten of the Societies (including the Northern Architectural Association) were represented, and each provincial President was afforded an opportunity of stating what educational facilities were offered to students in his particular district, and also the views held by his Society with regard to registration. With regard to Northumberland and Durham, I described the classes in Architecture and Design at the College of Science conducted by Mr. R. P. S. Twizell, A.R.I.B.A., and the various classes held at the Rutherford College. The opportunities for study varied considerably; the larger centres, such as Glasgow, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, and Leeds, being well supplied with Technical and Art classes, similar to what obtains in Newcastle, but they are still far behind the King's College, London University, and the Architectural Association in London.

Mr. Henry T. Hare, F.R.I.B.A., the President of the Architectural Association, gave some very useful information regarding the working of that institution. Mr. Hare has since then favoured me with some additional particulars, and as these are very interesting, I take the liberty of quoting a few extracts :—

The Architectural Association, London, was established in 1847, by architects in the interests of architectural

education. Many of the leading members of the profession are included in its roll of membership, which now numbers over 1,500; of these some 230 are students attending the evening classes and studios. It has been evident that the Schools should be opened during the day as well as in the evening, and in October 1901 arrangements were made to establish a complete day course in addition to the evening classes, the latter being still continued as heretofore. Many architects are of opinion that pupilage should be preceded by some elementary training before entering an office, and a year or two spent at such a School as the Architectural Association would enable a student to acquire at a moderate cost the rudiments of his work before learning the practical details of his profession.

The first year's course includes the following subjects :—

The use of instruments and scales.

Freehand drawing.

Elementary perspective.

Orders of classic architecture.

Elements of the various styles of architecture.

Sketching and measuring details and portions of existing buildings.

Lectures on the History of Architecture, illustrated by visits to buildings and museums.

Elementary construction and materials, illustrated by visits to workshops and buildings in progress.

The fee for this is fifteen guineas per term, there being three terms in the year.

The second year's course is more advanced, and takes in the principles of architectural design and perspective. Students attend this advanced course three days in the week only, the remaining time being spent in an office as pupil. The fee for this course is £10 10s. a term.

As an outcome of this I am hopeful that at no very distant date a Chair for Architecture may be established at the Durham College of Science, Newcastle, which in a large Association such as ours ought to be self-supporting. This will be one of the first subjects to be considered by the Council during the coming Session.

REGISTRATION OF ARCHITECTS.

With regard to the registration of architects, the majority of the Allied Presidents were in favour of it, but thought the Institute was the proper body to take up the subject. They explained very fully the injustice experienced by country practitioners owing to unqualified men

posing as architects who had never served their articles or had any special training. These views were most courteously received by the President (Mr. Webb) and other members of the R.I.B.A. Council who were present. They explained the great difficulty there was in reconciling the conflicting opinions of town and provincial members, and until the two sections were agreed it would be unwise to approach Parliament; but they promised the members of conference that the views expressed would be most carefully considered by the Council. This opportunity for expression of opinion was felt to be most helpful, and a suggestion was made that the conference should become an annual fixture.

THE YEAR'S PROGRESS.

The past year has been one of great activity in the building world. In the northern district some of the large public buildings in Newcastle, notably the new infirmary (Mr. H. Percy Adams, of London, and Messrs. Newcombe and Newcombe, of Newcastle, joint architects) and the Laing Art Gallery (Messrs. Cackett and Burns Dick) are well advanced; whilst St. Chad's Church, Gateshead, and All Saints' Parish Hall, Newcastle (Messrs. Hicks and Charlewood), New Wesleyan Mission Hall in Westgate Hill, Newcastle (Messrs. Crouch and Butler, of Birmingham), and several Board Schools, have been completed. Other buildings, the outcome of private enterprise, such as the "Collingwood Buildings" and "Dial House," Northumberland Street (Messrs. Oliver, Leeson, and Wood); Star Buildings (Messrs. Newcombe and Newcombe) and Messrs. Sopwith's new premises, both in Northumberland Street (Messrs. Cackett and Burns Dick); the Caledonian Insurance Company's offices in Pilgrim Street (Mr. S. D. Robins); Mr. Moffett's buildings in Collingwood Street (Mr. J. Walton Taylor), are finished; whilst the new offices for the Pearl Assurance Company at the corner of Northumberland Street and New Bridge Street (Mr. William Hope); "Emmerson Chambers" in Blackett Street (Mr.

B. F. Simpson); the Consett Iron Company's new offices in Pilgrim Street (Mr. C. E. Oliver); Messrs. Deuchar's new premises at the corner of Grey Street and Hood Street (Messrs. W. H. Knowles, of Newcastle, and W. and T. Milburn, of Sunderland, joint architects); Mr. Milburn's new offices, Dean Street, and The Side (Messrs. Oliver, Leeson, and Wood, and Marshall and Tweedy, joint architects), are making rapid progress.

There is every indication of a falling off in the erection of large undertakings, whilst speculative building is practically at a standstill. The outlook for architects is, therefore, not nearly so bright as it has been of late years. We must, however, not take a dismal view of things, but hope that the slackness is but temporary.

RECONSTRUCTION OF NORTHERN TOWNS.

Of late, frequent reference has been made in the local press to the great changes which are taking place in the appearance of the large northern towns; the old landmarks are being removed, and in their places palatial buildings erected in the principal thoroughfares. It is pleasing to note that in nearly every instance these have been designed by members of our Association, and I think both in design and general adaptability they will compare favourably with similar structures in other large provincial cities. I am afraid, however, that strangers passing through Newcastle by train see little else than the tops of grimy chimneys, and so obtain a very dismal and incorrect impression of the architecture of our city.

It is interesting to compare the old maps of Newcastle, prepared by Mr. Oliver (father of the late Mr. Thomas Oliver, F.R.I.B.A.), with the most recent surveys. We then realise what a vast development has taken place not only in the centre of the city but notably in the suburbs.

Pleasure gardens and country walks of the olden time are now covered with street after street of houses, so that the neighbouring villages are

practically part of Newcastle. Should the extension of the city boundaries be carried out by the incorporation of the urban districts of Benwell and Fenham, Gosforth and Walker, and the parishes of Longbenton, Kenton, and Fawdon, the municipal area will be increased by 11,624 acres, and make the total area of Newcastle city 16,979 acres. The increase of population, taken from the returns of last census, will be 56,424, and with the proposed extension Newcastle will then possess 278,665 inhabitants.

The greatest transition in Newcastle took place about seventy years ago, when the late Mr. Grainger secured Anderson Place and grounds, the Nuns' Gardens and fields, and had the ground cleared and laid out into wide thoroughfares, which entirely transformed the appearance of the city and diverted the trend of business. I have in my possession a plan and isometrical view, prepared by Mr. T. Sopwith in 1834, which shows the original scheme, which I have brought for your inspection. I also quote from the plan a description of the proposed new streets and market:—

1. The principal street commences at the head of Dean Street and stretches northward to Blackett Street, which it enters in front of St. James's Chapel. This street will be 80 feet wide, the houses will be built with architectural elevations richly ornamented, and the whole of polished stone, and the carriageway will be macadamised.

2. Another leading street commences near the head of the principal street, where it joins Blackett Street, and extends into the Bigg Market where the Turk's Head Yard now is. This street will be 70 feet wide, and, like those of the principal street, the houses will be of polished stone.

3. A third street commences in Pilgrim Street a little below the entrance to Anderson Place, is continued across the principal street and terminates in the street No. 2. This street, like the preceding, will be 70 feet wide, and the houses also of polished stone.

- 4, 5, and 6. Three other streets, each 50 feet wide, and with houses of a character similar to those in the streets already described, commence in Pilgrim Street, one below Anderson Place and two above, and will terminate in the principal street.

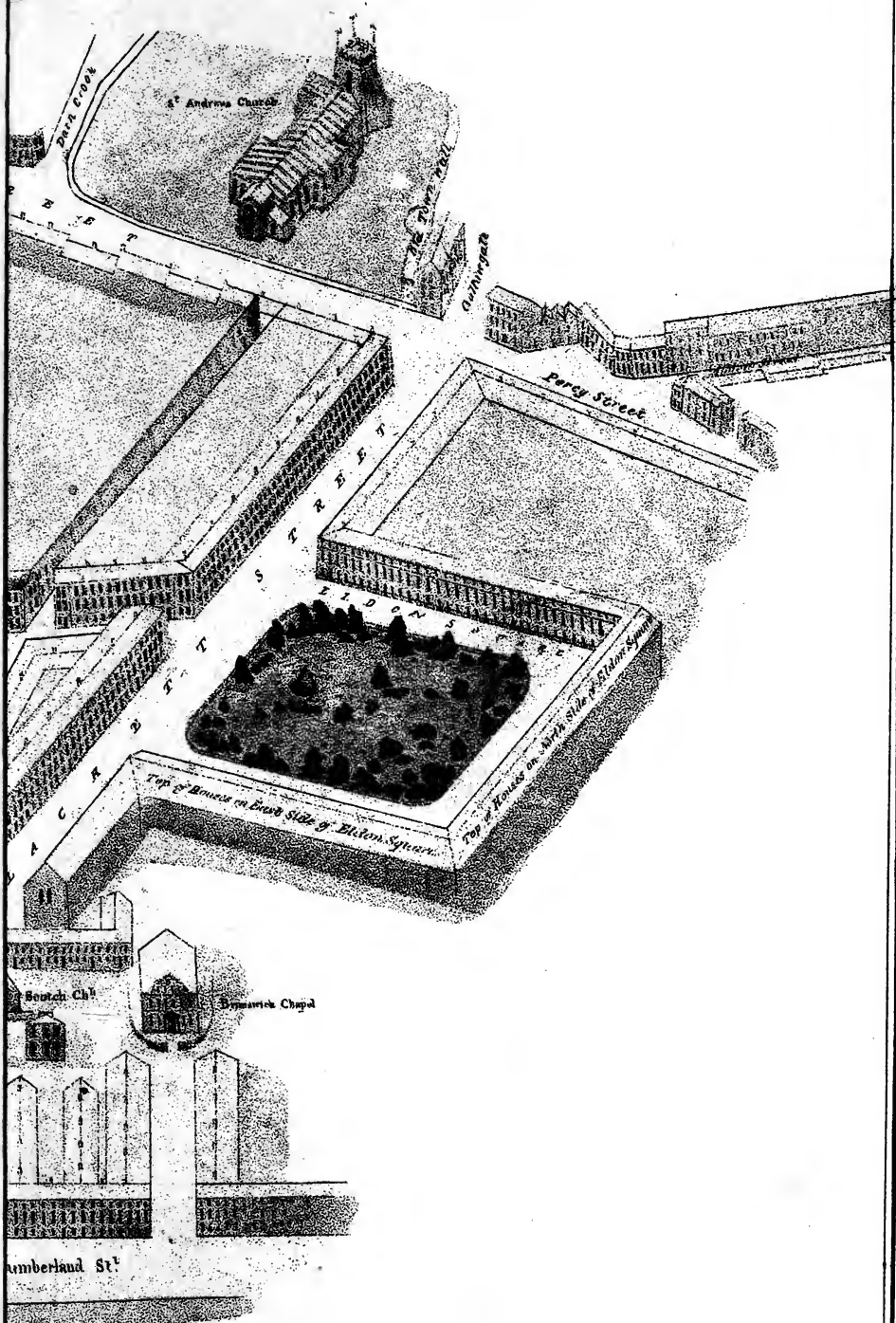
7. A seventh street commences in the centre of the south side of Eldon Square, and extends into Newgate Street at a point between the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Company's office and Mr. Joseph Clark's shop.

The new market will occupy an area of nearly two acres,

bounded to the eastward by the street No. 2, and to the westward by the street No. 7. The north and south boundaries are formed by two streets, each 50 feet wide (8 and 9), which commence in the Bigg Market Street No. 2 and terminate in that which commences in the centre of Eldon Square No. 7. Its distance from the present market will not exceed 170 yards.

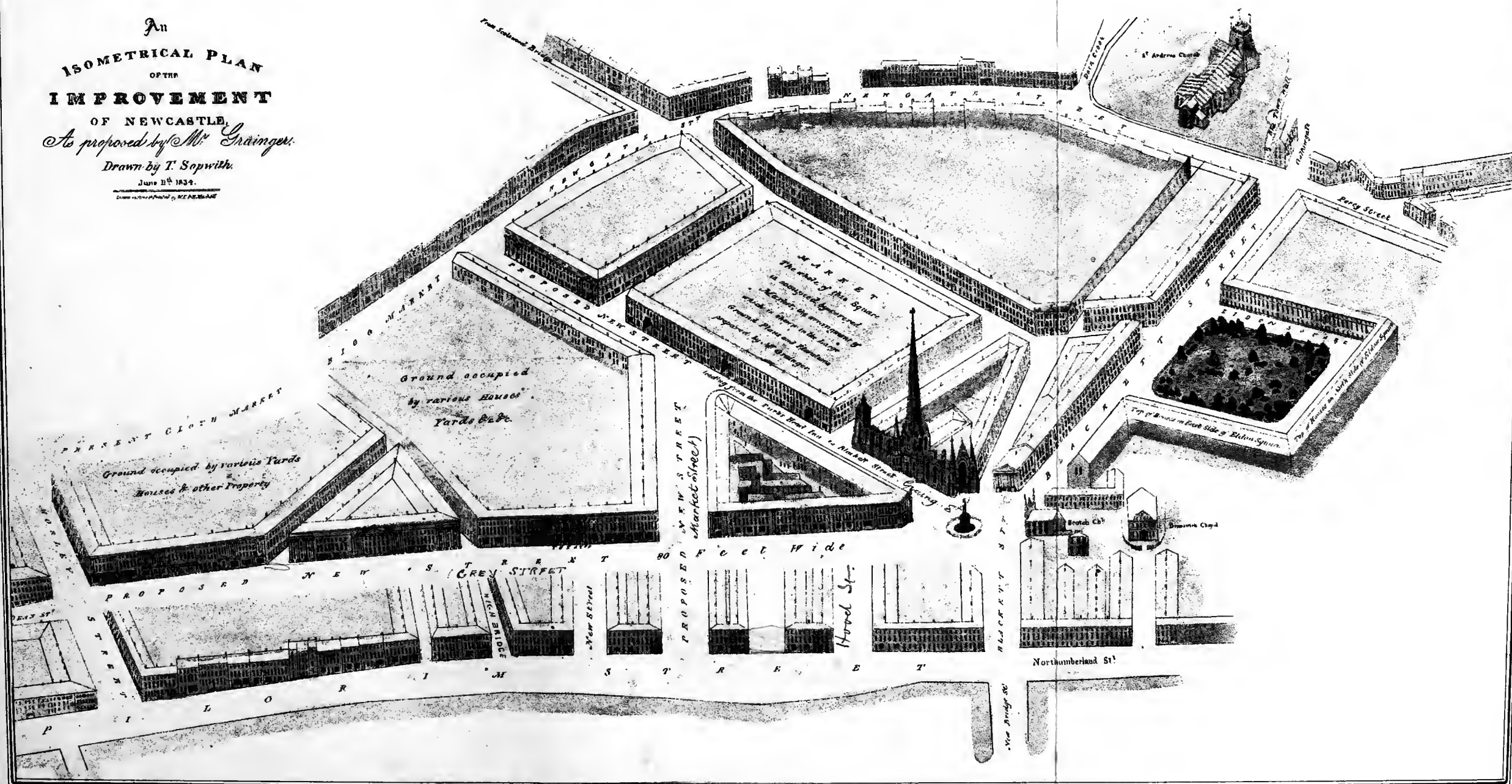
The market will contain 278 shops, exclusive of the vegetable and poultry stalls, the whole under well-lighted and well-ventilated roofs, and with eight commodious entrances from the principal streets already described.

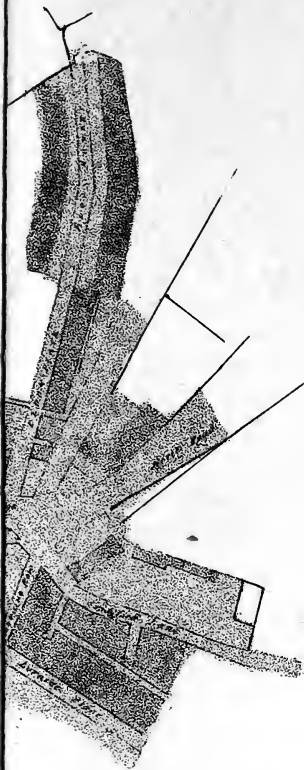
You will notice how closely the first ideas have been adhered to. These consisted of a street, 80 feet wide, in continuation of Dean Street, parallel with Pilgrim Street (then the main street), which he named New Dean Street (now Grey Street); another new street, 70 feet wide (Grainger Street), connected Bigg Market with Blackett Street at the top of New Dean Street. Another street, 50 feet wide (Clayton Street), was projected to connect Newgate Street and Blackett Street, and ran parallel with Grainger Street. Various cross streets are shown at right angles to the main thoroughfares, giving readiness of access. These are known as Hood Street, Market Street, and Shakespeare Street, connecting New Dean Street and Pilgrim Street, and Nelson and Nun Street uniting Grainger Street with Clayton Street. To enable Mr. Grainger to carry out these proposals it was necessary to cut through the old market, situate between Pilgrim Street and the Cloth Market. In lieu of this he suggested an excellent site for the new markets, facing into Grainger Street, and extending right back to Clayton Street, with the new cross streets, Nun Street and Nelson Street, 50 feet wide, on each side. The old theatre, which stood in Drury Lane, was intended to be rebuilt on the west side of New Dean Street (at present occupied by the Turk's Head Hotel); but eventually the site was changed to the opposite side of the street, a proposed cross street was omitted, and the entire space between Market Street and Shakespeare Street was utilised for buildings. In the formation of Grainger Street it was found necessary to cut through the Nag's Head and Turk's Head





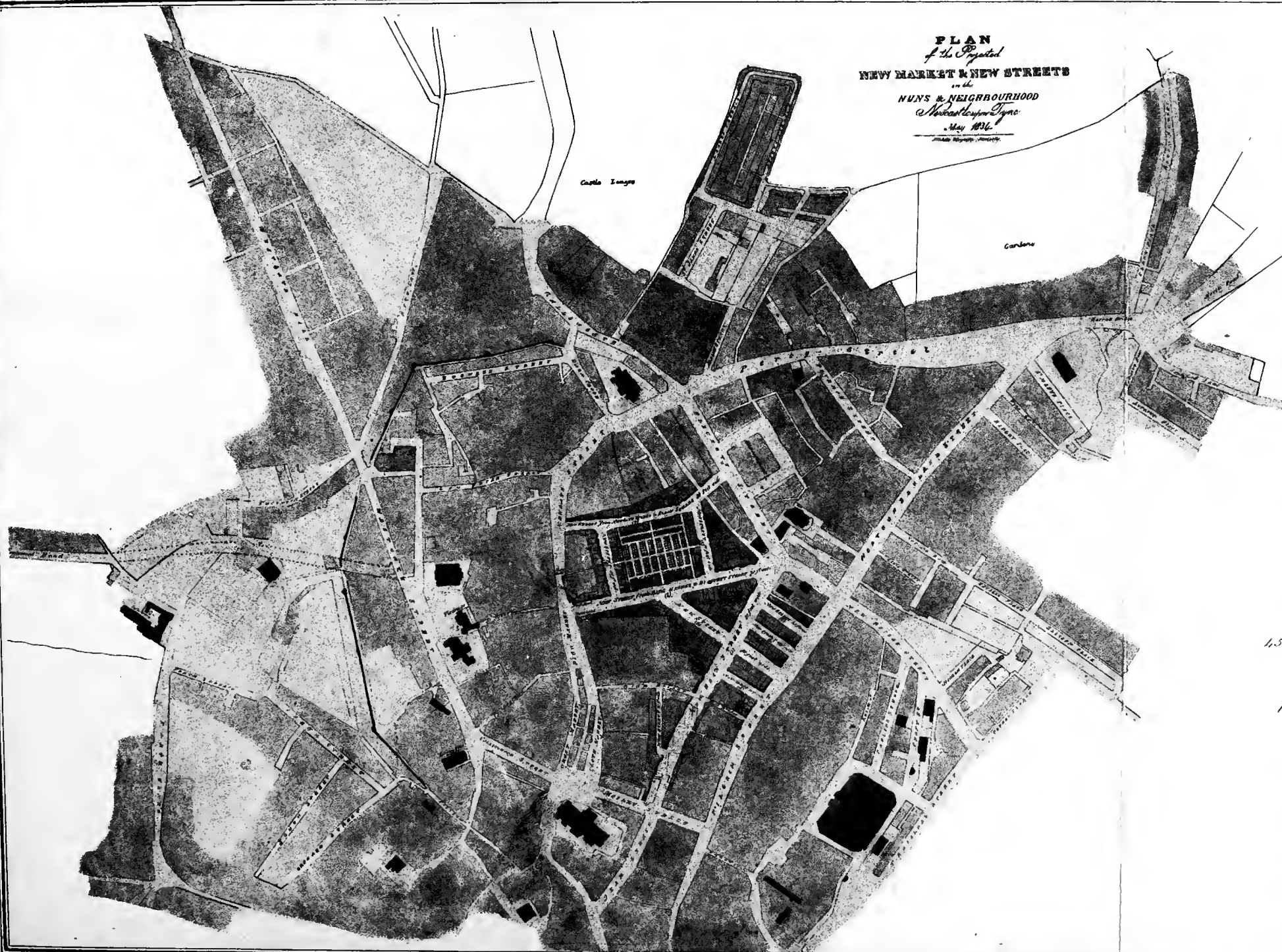
An
ISOMETRICAL PLAN
OF THE
IMPROVEMENT
OF NEWCASTLE.
As proposed by Mr. Grainger.
Drawn by T. Sopwith.
June 11th 1834.





Description of the Streets & Market.

1. The principal Street commences at the head of Dean Street & stretches northward to Blackett Street which it enters in front of James Street. This Street will be 80 feet wide; the Houses will be built with Architectural Elevations richly ornamental and the whole of polished Stone. The foot path, on each side of the Street will be 12 feet wide of Limestone, and the Carriage way will be 16 ft. wide.
2. Another leading Street commences near the head of the principal Street, where it joins Blackett Street, and extends into the Bagg Market where the Turkeys Head Yard is. This Street will be 70 feet wide, and like those of the principal Street the Houses will be of polished Stone.
3. A third Street commences in Pilgrim Street, a little below the entrance to Anderson Place, is continued across the principal Street & terminates in the Street No. 2. This Street like the preceding will be 70 feet wide, and the Houses also of polished Stone.
4. 5. 6. Three other Streets each 50 feet wide, each in a house of a character similar to those in the Streets already described, commence in Pilgrim Street, one below Anderson Place and two above and will terminate in the principal Street.
7. A seventh Street commences in the centre of the South side of Eldon Square and extends into Newgate Street at a point between the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway Company's Office & Mr. Joseph Clark's Shop.
 The new Market will occupy an Area of nearly 3 Acres bounded to the Eastward by the Street No. 2 and to the Westward by the Street No. 7. The North and South Boundaries are formed by two Streets each 50 feet wide (No. 8 & 9) which commence in the Bagg Market Street No. 2 & terminate in that which commences in the centre of Eldon Square No. 7. Its distance from the present Market will not exceed 170 yards.
 The Market will contain 278 Shops exclusive of the Vegetable & Butchery Halls: the whole under well lighted & well ventilated Roofs & with eight commodious Entrances from the principal Streets already described.



PLAN
of the Proposed
NEW MARKET & NEW STREETS
in the
NUNS & NEIGHBOURHOOD
Newcastle upon Tyne
May 1836
J. H. Kell & Son, Lith.

Description of the Streets: Market

1. The principal Street commences at the head of Dean Street which is not shown in the plan of the proposed Market. This Street will be 30 feet wide, the houses will be built with the external elevations richly ornamented and the whole of polished stone. The footpaths on each side of the Street will be 10 feet wide, the drains will be 10 feet wide.
 2. Another Street commences at the head of the principal Street, where it joins Blackfriars Street and extends into the proposed Market. This Street will be 10 feet wide, and like those of the principal Street the houses will be of polished stone.
 3. A third Street commences in Queen Street a little below the entrance to Anderson Place, and extends across the principal Street & terminates in the Street N° 2. This Street like the preceding will be 10 feet wide, and the houses also of polished stone.
 4. Three other Streets begin at the same point, & are of a character similar to those in the Streets already described, commencing in Queen Street one below Anderson Place and two above, and will terminate in the principal Street.
 5. A seventh Street commences in the centre of the south side of Eldon Square, and extends into the proposed Street at a point between the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway Company's office & Mr. Joseph B. Clarke's Shop.
- The new Market will occupy an area of nearly 10 acres, bounded to the Eastward by the Street N° 2 and to the Westward by the Street N° 1. The North and South Boundaries are formed by two Streets each 10 feet wide (N° 3 & 4) which commence on the proposed Street N° 2 & terminate in that which commences in the centre of Eldon Square N° 7. The distance from the present Market will not exceed 100 yards.
- The Market will contain 200 shops, exclusive of the vegetable & poultry stalls, the whole under well lighted well ventilated Roofs with high chimneys & a distance from the principal Street already described.



public-houses, and he provided a site for the new Turk's Head in Grainger Street (now occupied by the Grainger Hotel); but eventually the site at first intended for the Theatre Royal, in New Dean Street, was adopted for this building. You will notice that at this date Grainger Street West was not contemplated, and the only means of communication with Neville Street and the New Grainger Street was by means of St. John's Lane. This at a later date was cut through, and the present handsome approach from the Central Station formed, which has taken the place of Pilgrim Street in the olden times, and later of Grey Street, and become the principal business thoroughfare of the city. Blackett Street and Eldon Square were already in existence, and no doubt the erection of these dwellings had suggested to Mr. Grainger the idea for further development.

Although a great deal of the credit for the initiation of this vast improvement is undoubtedly due to Mr. Richard Grainger and his legal adviser Mr. John Clayton, yet we should not overlook the important part which our first President, Mr. John Dobson, Messrs. John and Benjamin Green, Mr. John Wardle, Mr. George Walker, and others, took in the designing of the handsome street frontages which are the admiration of all visitors to the northern metropolis. I think it is very much to be regretted there has been so little recognition of these pioneers of architecture, and something should be done by our Association to keep their names green in the memory of younger Newcastle. Whether it will be possible in the near future to realise Mr. Glover's cherished wish of securing a permanent home, it is difficult to say. If that were done, it would be very desirable to have an exhibition of the works carried out by them, and thus form a museum of art similar to the Royal Institute of British Architects; but, failing that, it may perhaps be within the range of possibility for our Vice-President (Mr. J. T. Cackett) and the Treasurer (Mr. R. Burns Dick) to secure from the Library Committee of the Corporation a

corner in the New Laing Art Gallery, which they recently designed, to be known as the Architectural Section.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUBURBS.

Although we may justly be proud of our principal streets, I am afraid the same cannot be said of our northern suburbs. Compare these with Birmingham, Nottingham, Sheffield, Bristol, Cardiff, and other commercial centres, and we realise at once how inferior they are. Architects are often censured for this state of things, and even held responsible for the class of houses which spring up in all directions on the outskirts of all large northern towns. I think it is time we should clear ourselves of this unpleasant stigma. Are we really to blame? If we inquire how it is that in some of the large industrial towns of Great Britain and Ireland there are such fine suburbs, wide streets with avenues of trees, attractive detached houses standing in the midst of well-planted gardens, I think we shall find that in every case the original landowner had the foresight to lay out the roads, plant trees, and was prepared to wait until the demand arose for sites. He laid down stringent building conditions, and restricted the number and class of houses to be erected in a particular district, the result being that the residents were secured against any infringement in the event of the land changing hands. As a contrast to this, see what is taking place in our beautiful suburb of Jesmond! Where once stood noble mansions with well-timbered grounds, we now have rows of tenement houses or small terrace houses with the inevitable back street, the trees cut down and the aspect of the whole district deteriorated. It is a well-known fact that small sites will yield a larger price and bring in a quicker return than if laid out as villas. Instead of the entire district being in the hands of one public-spirited owner, it has been bought up in sections by syndicates, who compete against each other for the largest return for their investment. It may be said that

Newcastle is strictly a commercial and manufacturing town; but what about Birmingham with its beautiful suburb of Edgbaston, or Bristol with Clifton? or, better still, take Cardiff, which is now reaping the benefit of the shrewd, far-seeing late Marquis of Bute, who laid out wide avenues, reserved sites for municipal buildings and parks, whilst the town was in its infancy, and now we see a model borough, with the charming marine watering-place of Penarth within a few minutes' railway journey laid out on similar lines. I cannot help thinking that our public bodies should do something to prevent these self-centred vested interests, and formulate a well-thought-out scheme for the development of all new districts.

Mr. Frank W. Rich, F.R.I.B.A., Past President, in his inaugural address of November 1898, alluded to the small percentage of domestic buildings designed by architects. He very ably defended our profession from the uncomplimentary opinions sometimes expressed with regard to our street architecture, and clearly showed that we were in many instances not responsible for the erection of the ordinary class of dwellings. But where architects were engaged he advocated thoroughness in plan and simplicity of design. With these remarks I thoroughly agree, and would strongly recommend our younger men to study carefully his excellent advice.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

One of the most prominent questions in all large centres of population is the housing problem. In the *County Monthly* for March 1903 an article appeared under the title of *The Warrens of the Poor*, being one of a series descriptive of the slumdom of the great provincial cities. The subject chosen for that month is *Vivid Pictures from Newcastle*, wherein the writer describes in graphic language, and illustrates with special photographs and sketches, some of the dismal tenemented properties which are known to many of us in Dog Bank, The

Close, the lower part of Pilgrim Street, Sandgate, &c. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that many of the dwellings in these old courts and chares are unfit for habitation ; but unless they are closed by the city authorities, a certain class of people will continue to live in them, not that they are compelled by poverty to do so, but because they become indifferent to their surroundings, and so herd together. Even if these were closed to-morrow, it is very doubtful whether this class of people would not in many instances remove into another locality which is at present respectable, and so in a short time it would become as bad as those from which they were displaced. This subject has been taken up at different times by philanthropists, budding politicians, faddists, and social reformers ; but, so far as I am aware, no society of architects has ever dealt with it in a practical way. I think we may claim to know something of the difficulties, and as we have "no axe to grind," but seek rather to beautify and ennoble the towns and cities in which we live by the exercise of our profession, our attention should be directed to it during the coming session, and this is my only apology for introducing it here. Some of the social reformers have advocated costly schemes for pulling down large areas of slum property, and building in their places palatial blocks of dwellings at the public expense ; others have visions of transporting the dwellers of slumland into the suburbs, and forming a colony there, on the model of Bourneville near Birmingham, Saltaire in Yorkshire, or Port Sunlight. Let us look a moment at each of these proposals.

INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS.

I think we may take it for granted that people of this class do not like the restraint and order inseparable from buildings of this kind. It is imperative that there should be a resident manager who will not only look after the interests of the owners, but see that order is maintained. I am afraid the ordinary inhabitant of the slum does not favour this arrangement, and would

rather prefer to live in unsavoury surroundings and have freedom. Then, as to the cost. I think we shall agree that high buildings built with fire-proof materials cannot be erected to conform with the local by-laws and yield a fair return on the capital expended as an investment.

THE REMOVAL INTO THE SUBURBS.

The average workman likes to be within easy reach of his daily labour, and, all things being equal, would prefer to be where he could go home to dinner. The model villages referred to, especially Bourneville and Port Sunlight, are the centres of vast industries where large works have been erected by the employers, who secured sufficient land to provide houses with garden plots. The residents, therefore, only require to be provided with public halls, reading rooms, bowling greens, and other means of recreation, combined with shops for the purchase of the necessities of life, to make them a happy, contented community. We know very well how difficult it is to persuade workmen to leave the towns to work on buildings in country villages, even in summer amidst beautiful scenery and pleasant surroundings, and when they do consent to go they are constantly longing to get back into the well-lighted streets and variety of town life. In this district, where the principal industries are engineering and ship-building, the works cannot be removed, and the land is too valuable (even if possible) for houses of this class, and it must also be kept in mind that the workmen often have to change from one yard to another to secure regular employment, which they could not so conveniently do if located in the suburbs.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION ?

In my opinion the Corporation of Newcastle are acting wisely in erecting two-storied dwellings in tenements on the line of the electric tram route, so that those who wish to live at a cheap rent can do so, and readily remove from one ship-

yard or works to another ; besides, the facilities for travelling in workmen's cars are so great that there should not be any difficulty in the men getting quickly to their work in any weather. In fact, the quick and frequent electric tram and train service promises to be the solution to a great extent of the housing problem. For those who will not remove from the slums I would suggest the course adopted by the Borough of Camberwell, as reported in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* of 16th April, 1903 :

Instead of pulling down the tenements in slum areas and turning out the tenants to find habitations how and where they can, Camberwell has selected the Hollington Street and Sultan Street area lying off Camberwell Road, and containing the population of over 4,000, and is gradually transforming the housing accommodation of the whole. The Borough Council buys the houses not to pull them down, but to improve and adapt them. The purchases are made privately, at reasonable prices, and not at the inflated values customary in the case of compulsory sales. The houses are then transformed into healthy tenements, in some cases without even turning the occupiers out ; and not only is the standard of the house accommodation being raised over the whole neighbourhood, but rents are kept low. The experiment has been a striking success, and the scheme being entirely self-supporting has not cost the ratepayers a penny.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS UNDERTAKING PRIVATE WORK.

I now wish to touch briefly upon a matter which leads us upon somewhat delicate ground ; that is, the question of officials in Corporation and District Council offices doing architectural work. As this is a subject which affects us very directly and materially, and is likely to affect us more in the future than it has already done, I think it is well to direct attention to it, so that the necessary steps may be taken to bring pressure to bear upon those in authority.

It seems manifestly unfair that we architects should be deprived of an opportunity of earning a livelihood by those already in receipt of regular salaries, towards which we, as ratepayers, contribute. These gentlemen have no office rent to pay, no stationery to provide ; and yet, in some

instances, they are allowed to undertake private work. It is a further injustice that the same persons are permitted to report upon their own plans, which is surely a state of affairs entirely out of keeping with things as they ought to be in an elective and governing public body. These are matters which we as an Association will do well to consider carefully, and I leave them with confidence in your hands.

In conclusion I wish to put myself right with my hearers regarding some of the subjects touched upon in this address. I do not for a moment forget that my remarks as President should be representative of the whole of the members comprised within the area of the Northern Architectural Association which includes the counties of Northumberland and Durham. We have also 216 on the membership roll, and I believe I am correct in saying this is the largest number since its inception. If more frequent reference has been made to Newcastle than other towns, I trust my country brethren will not think their interests have been overlooked, as my remarks are intended to apply to the district generally. Newcastle is the home of the Association, is admitted to be the metropolis of the North ; my thoughts therefore have naturally dwelt more upon what concerns its past and future development. Some of the other matters referred to may appear of a somewhat personal character ; but many of us feel they are of a pressing and vital importance to the well-being of our noble profession, and I should be failing in my duty as your President if I were to miss this opportunity of calling attention to them, with the hope that permanent good may result.

Mr. Mulholland (Sunderland)
President

d. Nov 1953

Robert Burns Trust F.R.I.B.A.
d. Dec 11. 1954

